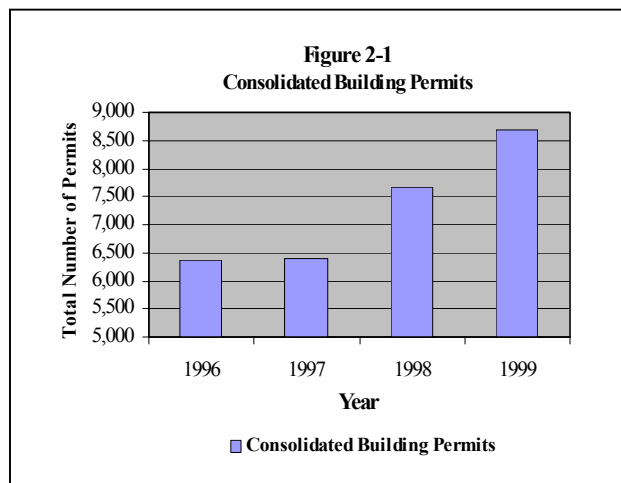


2.3 Land Use and Development Trends

The Project Corridor is developing in a typical suburban pattern where new residential growth radiates out from established urban areas, then in-fills areas in between. Outward expansion of older anchor communities including Joliet and Lockport has proceeded for the past 10 years. Suburban in-fill began in earnest in the 1980's and is expected to continue due to demand for affordable suburban housing, availability of developable land and proximity to job centers.

Table 2-1 Project Corridor Land Use			
Category	1990 Hec- tares (Acres)	1999 Hec- tares (Acres)	Planned Hectares (Acres)
Residential	7,166 (17,708)	9,003 (22,246)	16,266 (40,193)
Commercial/ Industrial	3,515 (8,686)	4,741 (11,715)	7,460 (18,435)
Open/ Undeveloped	20,764 (51,310)	17,702 (43,743)	7,720 (19,076)

[Exhibit 1-4](#) in Chapter 1 of this Final SEIS depicts the progression of Project Corridor development between 1990 and 1999, as well as planned development. Table 2-1 summarizes the total hectares (acres) of basic land use categories within the Project Corridor. Between 1990 and 1999, the land area of residential and commercial/industrial land use within the Project Corridor increased by 29 percent to account for 44 percent of the Project Corridor lands. Adopted land use plans of Will County and the Project Corridor municipalities designate over 75 percent of the total Project Corridor lands to be developed for residential, commercial and other use.



Considerable development has occurred within the Project Corridor. Consolidated building permit data for incorporated and unincorporated areas of the Project Corridor show a rapid increase in the number of building permits issued between 1997 and 1999 (Figure 2-1). Refer to the [Draft SEIS, Section 2.3](#) for additional land use information.

2.4 Socio-Economic Characteristics

2.4.1 Community Description

The overall community character of the Project Corridor consists of mature incorporated cities surrounded by unincorporated area undergoing rapid residential development.

2.4.2 Population Projection

The Study Area will experience very substantial growth between 1990 and 2020. NIPC projects the population of the Study Area to nearly double from 472,935 to 859,951 during this period.

A supplemental study was undertaken to estimate the specific impacts attributable to the I-355 South Extension and I-80 Improvement. The study, [The Socio-Economic and Land Use Impacts of the Proposed I-355 Extension](#) (Draft SEIS, Appendix A), examined the impacts on population and employment growth of building or not building the I-355 South Extension. A Study Area of 13 full townships was analyzed. Within this Study Area, a smaller Study Corridor (one Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) on either side of the proposed I-355 South Extension alignment) was also examined.

The Study findings were:

- The net population impact within the Study Area is 1,311 persons, under the Existing Airports Scenario and 2,669 under the South Suburban Airport Scenario. This represents a 0.3 percent and 0.6 percent of the 1990 to 2020 forecast population growth, respectively.
- The I-355 South Extension and I-80 improvement concentrates growth within a narrow band and draw from the areas further west and south.

Refer to the [Draft SEIS, Section 2.4.2](#) for additional information.

2.4.3 Employment Projection

NIPC projects employment within the Study Area to increase 111% from 143,036 to 302,352 between 1990 and 2020.

[The Socio-Economic and Land Use Impacts of the Proposed I-355 Extension](#) (Draft SEIS Appendix A), found:

- Compared to the No-Action (Baseline), the number of jobs created by the Build scenario would be small and amount to an estimated increase of 168 jobs for both airport scenarios.
- This increase in jobs would be located at the major interchange areas of I-355 and I-80 and represent an incremental increase of 0.1 percent of total Study Area job growth.

Refer to the [Draft SEIS, Section 2.4.3](#) for additional information.

2.4.4 Demographics

The Project Corridor age profile remained relatively unchanged between 1990 and 1998, with the 18 to 65 group representing over 60 percent of the population, remaining the largest age group. Income data presented in the 1996 FEIS, compiled from the 1990 U.S. Census, found the higher per capita income levels within the developing unincorporated areas of Homer, New Lenox and DuPage townships. Incomes within these areas were classified at the middle and upper-middle levels. The lowest per capita incomes were found in the older communities of Joliet and Lockport, which were classified in the lower and lower-middle levels. [Draft SEIS, Exhibit 2-8](#) maps 1990 U.S. Census poverty level by census block. Poverty level is based on Department of Health and Human Services poverty thresholds. Poverty thresholds are determined based on household income and family size.

2.4.5 Racial, Ethnic and Special Groups

The majority race within the Project Corridor is Caucasian. However, African-Americans and Other minority groups as a percent of total Project Corridor population increased from 7 to 11 percent between the 1980 and 1990 Census. Project Corridor racial composition is diversifying, although the geographic distribution of minority populations remain concentrated in Joliet. [Draft SEIS, Exhibit 2-9](#) maps race distribution within the Study Area.

2.4.6 Major Employers

Since publication of the 1996 FEIS, 139 business entities developed or expanded facilities within Will County. Over 65 percent of these entities are located in the Project Corridor and the City of Joliet. Major new employers include Sprint PCS (1,200 employees) and Tellabs, Inc. (1,063 employees) in Bolingbrook and Sharp Electronics (600 employees) in Romeoville. [Draft SEIS, Appendix B](#), Table B-3 lists the size and location of major employers within the Project Corridor.

2.4.7 Economic Bases

The economic base of the Project Corridor is composed of three core employment sectors: service, retail and manufacturing. Within Will County, these core sectors represented 72 percent of the total jobs and over 63 percent of the annual payroll in 1997. Service and retail posted the highest growth rates between 1993 and 1997. While agriculture remains important in terms of overall land use, it accounted for a small fraction of county employment and payroll. Total jobs within Will County increased 20 percent between 1992 and 1998 with an average annual growth rate of 3 percent. Refer to [1996 FEIS, Section 2.3.3](#) for additional information.

2.5 Public Services and Facilities

Table 2-2 inventories public services and facilities proposed, under construction or completed within the Project Corridor since publication of the 1996 FEIS. Notable are 11 new schools approved for construction through referendum or completed, as well as an additional 12 expansions to existing schools undertaken after publication of the 1996 FEIS. School expansions are a good growth indicator. The number of expansions

Table 2-2 Public Services and Facilities				
Type	Included in 1996 FEIS	Expansion of Existing After 1996 FEIS Publi- cation	Proposed After 1996 FEIS Pub- lication	Referendum Pending
Elementary Schools	11	8	10	1
High Schools	4	4	1	None
Colleges	3	1	None	None
Seminaries	1	None	None	None
Fire Stations	3	1	7	None
Police Stations	None	None	3	None
Medical	1	2	None	None
Places of Wor- ship	4	3	12	None
Cemeteries	15	None	None	None

within and adjacent to the Project Corridor indicate that school districts anticipate considerable growth in enrollment of school-aged children. Refer to [1996 FEIS, Section 2.3.4](#) for public services and facilities data prior to 1996.

2.6 Agriculture

2.6.1 Counties

The majority of large farms in Will County are located outside the Project Corridor within the southern portion of the County. For this reason, the Will County Land Resource Management Plan (1990) designates the majority of agricultural land within the southern portion of Will County as agriculture preservation area. The Project Corridor is located in the northern portion of Will County and is an area designated for urban development. No agricultural preservation lands exist within the Project Corridor.

Table 2-3 Agricultural Land Conversion in Project Corridor	
Year	Area Converted Hectares (Acres)
1996	71 (176)
1997	201 (497)
1998	84 (208)
1999	118 (291)
Total Land Converted	474 (1,172)

Source: USDA

Agricultural land conversion to other use within the Project Corridor since publication of the 1996 FEIS is summarized in Table 2-3. In 1996, the Project Corridor contained approximately 7,460 hectares (18,500 acres) of agricultural land. Approximately 6 percent was converted to other land use between 1996 and 1999. A total of 6,986 hectares (17,327 acres) or 23 percent of the Project Corridor remains in agricultural use. Refer to the Draft SEIS and [1996 FEIS, Section 2.6](#) for additional information.

2.6.2 Prime Farmland and Others

No substantive change has occurred to this resource since publication of the 1996 FEIS. Refer to [1996 FEIS, Section 2.6.2](#).

2.7 Forest Preserves and Parks

The number and size of forest preserves and parks within the Project Corridor has remained unchanged since publication of the 1996 FEIS, with the exception of the Homer Township Open Space located to the northeast of the Gougar Road/Bruce Road intersection and the Will County Forest Preserve District's Spring Creek Preserve/Greenway.

Homer Township Open Space was purchased in 1998 and is a 25.5 hectare (63 acre) undeveloped parcel located at the northeast corner of Gougar Road and Bruce Road (175th Street). The property is not planned for development, and will remain undeveloped open space.

The Spring Creek Preserve/Greenway follows Spring Creek from approximately Farrel Road to Messenger Woods north of U.S. Route 6 in southeastern Homer Township. The Greenway is currently in the planning and acquisition phase by the Forest Preserve District of Will County. The District has acquired a portion of the Greenway from Farrel Road east to Gougar Road, although no construction has occurred. Overall the Spring